

Andy's ukulele blog

LESSON 2:

Your First Chord

*This lesson is about forming and playing your first chord on your ukulele.
If you are confident about this already then skip this lesson.*

A chord is a truly wonderful thing and depending on the chord it can express a range of different moods and emotions.... But more of that later.

At this stage, we're going to keep it as simple as possible, so this explanation is also simple and will gloss over a lot of stuff and no doubt upset the purists, but hey they're not trying to learn the uke at the moment.

A chord is three or more notes played in harmony, and we are going to demonstrate this with the chord of C, one of the easiest.

Numbering your fingers one to four from index (one) to pinky (four), place your third finger just before the third fret (looking from the machine head end) and gently depress the string so it rests on the fret.

Now a little more about this. When you press a string, you use the TIP of your finger rather than the fleshy pad of your finger. This might raise fashion issues for people who like their nails long. That is a life choice for you. Fashion or music? Your choice!

Once you have done this strum all four strings together, and voilà you have just played the chord of C major.

1. There is a reason why you use your third finger and this will become clearer later. At the moment, don't argue! Just do it!
2. Strumming is a glorious subject all by itself, and we will deal with it, but just for now it involves using your thumb to strike the strings starting with one and rapidly through to four in a smooth downwards motion.

This chord can be represented in a chord diagram.

There is no universal format for such diagrams and they vary in quality.

This diagram follows the format adopted by this website.

The number on the finger position indicates which finger you use, in this case it is the ring finger.

The two yellow spots represent the pitch marks on the keyboard of your ukulele.

They are not there just for decoration, but more of that later.

